



Amendments to the Specification:

Please amend the paragraph which begins on page 3, line 18 and ends on page 3, line 20, as follows:

--Presented herein are various embodiments of a safety scalpel. ~~According to~~ In one embodiment is a safety scalpel ~~system~~ including a handle capable of coupling to a blade with or without a safety housing.—

Please amend the paragraph which begins on page 3, line 21 and ends on page 4, line 2, as follows:

--In another embodiment, a safety scalpel ~~system~~ including a blade, a handle configured to couple to the blade, and a housing configured to couple to, and to enclose the blade, and to couple to the handle, and allow the blade to selectively couple to the handle and to selectively decouple from the housing, wherein the handle is configured to couple to the blade with or without the housing.—

Please amend the paragraph which begins on page 4, line 3 and ends on page 4, line 8, as follows:

~~--In yet Another embodiment, may include a safety blade housing system, including retaining members configured to couple to a blade, an actuable tab, a guide member integral with the tab configured to, when the tab is actuated, allow the housing to couple to a handle, and a blade actuator configured to, when actuated, decouple the blade from the handle, wherein the blade couples to the handle when the housing moves~~

~~between a safe position, and an exposed position wherein the blade is exposed for use a~~
cartridge system includes retaining members configured to contain a blade within the
housing, an actuatable tab or activator, wherein the blade couples to the handle and the
housing moves between a safety position and a blade exposed position, and a blade
disengaging actuator configured to decouple the blade contained within the housing
from the handle.—

Please amend the paragraph which begins on page 6, line 3 and ends on page 6,
line 7, as follows:

-- A safety scalpel system according to an exemplary embodiment is shown in
Figure 1, generally at 10. System 10 may include a handle 20 and a housing (cartridge)
40. The housing 40 is configured to house a blade and to couple to handle 20 such that
the blade may couple to the handle and housing 40 may slide up handle 20 to expose the
blade for use.--

Please amend the paragraph which begins on page 6, line 8 and ends on page 6,
line 15, as follows:

--Handle 20 may include a grasping structure 22, which may be configured to be
utilized by a user to hold the system when in use. Handle 20 may also include a
housing receiving portion 24, which may be adjacent to, and coupled to, grasping
structure 20 22. Furthermore, handle 20 may include a blade receiving portion 26
which may be adjacent to housing receiving portion 24. Blade receiving portion 26

may be configured to couple to a blade with or without housing 40. In this manner, the handle may be utilized with a bare scalpel blade, or it may be utilized with a blade within housing 40.—

Please amend the paragraph which begins on page 7, line 7 and ends on page 7, line 11, as follows:

--Housing 40 may include a ~~actuable~~ sliding movement tab or activator 42 and a blade disengaging actuator 46. ~~Tab Activator 42 may be engagedly couple to~~ includes a guide stop member 44 that will lock at opposite ends 53 and 54 of locking bar 52 (Fig. 1) to safely retain allow housing 40 to move from at [[a]] corresponding safety (blade covered) and "ready to use" (blade exposed) positions, as shown in Figures. 4 - 5, respectively to an exposed position as shown in Figure 5. Stop member 44 may be unlocked by pressing activator 42 in a generally downward direction, i.e. toward locking bar 52, as shown by respective directional arrows in Figs. 4 - 7. The blade exposed position may be defined by where housing 40 [[is]] being adjacent coupled to housing receiving portion 24 and [[a]] blade 12 [[is]] being coupled to blade receiving portion 26 and exposed for use.—

Please amend the paragraph which begins on page 8, line 16 and ends on page 8, line 21, as follows:

-- Figure 3 shows an elevational view of [[a]] system 10, again which may include handle 20, housing 40, and blade 12 (hidden). Blade 12 is retained in housing

40, and coupled to retaining members 50. As shown by the directional arrow, housing 40 may be moved toward handle 20, which again includes a blade receiving portion 26. In various embodiments, housing 40 may also include a tab or activator 42 and a guide stop member 44 which may be coupled to and/or integral with tab 42.--

Please amend the paragraph which begins on page 9, line 1 and ends on page 9, line 10, as follows:

-- Figure 4 shows housing 40 in the safety position, in which blade 12 is substantially, or completely enclosed by housing 40. Housing 40 may slide onto, or couple to, handle 20 and may remain in the safety position until tab or activator 42 is ~~actuated~~[[,]] pressed in a generally downward direction and housing 40 is moved toward grasping structure 22 of handle 20. When housing 40 is in the safety position, it may completely enclose blade 12, except for an opening in the front of housing 40, to allow blade 12 to extend outwardly when housing 40 is in [[an]] the blade exposed position. When tab or activator 42 is pressed in a generally downward direction ~~actuated~~, guide stop member 44 ~~may be actuated downwardly and couple to~~ engages top channel 32[[,]] such that it will slide within top channel 32[[,]] and allow housing 40 to move further toward grasping structure 22, as shown by the respective directional arrow.--

Please amend the paragraph which begins on page 9, line 18 and ends on page 10, line 2, as follows:

-- Figure 5 shows housing **40** in the blade exposed position where blade **12** is exposed for use by the user, and housing **40** is not covering blade **12** to allow the user to use ~~[[the]]~~ blade **12**. As shown by the directional arrows, when housing **40** is to be moved from the blade exposed position to the safety position, tab or activator **42** may be again pressed in a generally downward direction ~~actuated~~ which ~~may allow~~ would cause guide stop member **44** to ~~reenter~~ engage top channel **32** to allow housing **40** to move ~~with respect to handle 20~~ away from grasping structure 22.--

Please amend the paragraph which begins on page 10, line 3 and ends on page 10, line 6, as follows:

-- Figure 6 again shows housing **40** in the safety position, enclosing blade **12**. It will be appreciated that as shown by the directional arrows, tab or activator **42** may be pressed in a generally downward direction ~~actuated~~ again to permit guide stop member **44** to ~~enter~~ engage top channel **32** and to allow housing **40** to be returned to the blade exposed position to allow re-use of ~~[[the]]~~ blade **12** and housing **40**, as shown in Figure 7.--

Please amend the paragraph which begins on page 10, line 7 and ends on page 10, line 10, as follows:

-- Figure 7 again shows ~~[[the]]~~ housing **40** in the blade exposed position, and again the directional arrows show the downward ~~actuation~~ pressing of tab or activator

42 which allows ~~guide~~ stop member **44** to ~~enter~~ engage top channel **32** such that ~~[[the]]~~ housing **40** may be moved again to the safety position, as shown in Figure 8.--

Please amend the paragraph which begins on page 10, line 11 and ends on page 10, line 19, as follows:

-- Figure 8 shows ~~[[the]]~~ housing **40** in the safety position. In this position, blade **12** may remain coupled to handle **20** via blade receiving portion **26** and groove **30** (not shown). Blade disengaging actuator **46** may then be actuated to disengage blade **12** from handle **20** and back to retaining members **50** (not shown), when housing **40** is moved in the direction of the directional arrow. Blade disengaging actuator **46** may contact blade **12** and bias blade **12** away from handle **12** and toward housing **40**. In this manner blade **12** may selectively decouple and/or re-couple to and from housing **40** and handle **20** such that it may be removed safely and a new or different blade and/or housing and blade system may be utilized, as desired.--

Please amend the paragraph that begins on page 11, line 1 and ends on page 11 line 12, as follows:

--Figure 10 shows a handle **20** and a blade **12** according to an exemplary embodiment. Blade **12** may include an orifice **14**, as shown. Furthermore, handle 20 again may include a blade receiving portion **26** which may include a groove **30**. Groove **30** may be configured to couple to blade **12** and orifice **14** such that the blade will slide onto groove **30** and encounter stop **28** as shown in Figure 11. In this manner,

bare blades may couple to handle 20 via this configuration. Furthermore, this ~~maybe~~ may be generally the manner in which blade 12 couples to handle 20 when substantially being enclosed in housing 40 (not shown) when used within the system. Furthermore, handle 20 may be configured to receive bare blades and/or blades within safety housing 40. Yet further, handle 20 may be configured with weighting characteristics particular to each individual user, such that many may be made, and the user may be more comfortable with the weight and “feel” of handle 20.—

Please amend the paragraph that begins on page 11, line 13 and ends on page 11 line 16, as follows:

-- Blade 12 may also be integral with handle 20, and housing 40 may move from a safety position to a blade exposed position. With this configuration the entire system may be disposable. Furthermore, blade 12 may also be made of plastic, and may be formed at, or near the same time as handle 20.--

Please amend the paragraph that begins on page 12, line 3 and ends on page 12, line 11, as follows:

--Figure 12 shows a cross-sectional view of system 10 along lines 12-12 from Figure 8. As shown, when blade disengaging actuator 46 is actuated downwardly as depicted by the directional arrow labeled A, it may contact blade 12 and disengage blade 12 from blade receiving portion 26 of handle 20 as housing 40 is moved in the

direction of the directional arrow labeled **B**. Furthermore, when housing **40** is moved in the direction of the directional arrow **B**, away from handle **20**, blade **12** will stay generally stationary with respect to housing **40** and may contact, and be coupled to, retaining members **50**. In this manner, blade **12** may decouple from blade receiving portion **26** of handle **20** and selectively recouple to housing **40**.--

Please amend the paragraph that begins on page 12, line 19 and ends on page 12, line 21, as follows:

--Housing **40** may selectively attach, detach, and reattach to handle ~~**40**~~ **20**, as desired. This configuration would allow a user to reuse a blade and housing, as needed.--

Please amend the paragraph which begins on page 13, line 13 and ends on page 13, line 18, as follows:

-- In closing, it is to be understood that the exemplary embodiments described herein are meant to be merely illustrative of the general principles of ~~exemplary embodiments~~ the present invention. Other modifications that may be employed are within the scope of this disclosure. Thus, by way of example, but not of limitation, alternative configurations may be utilized in accordance with the teachings herein. Accordingly, the drawings and description[[s]] are illustrative and not meant to be a limitation thereof. It is intended that the invention cover all embodiments and variations thereof as long as such embodiments and variations come within the scope of the